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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/760,467	01/21/2004	Yoshinori Uchie	VX042584	1399
21369	7590	07/13/2005	EXAMINER	
VARNDELL & VARNDELL, PLLC			WALTERS, JOHN DANIEL	
106-A S. COLUMBUS ST.			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			3618	
DATE MAILED: 07/13/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/760,467	UCHIE ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	John D. Walters	3618

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-5 and 8-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 6 and 7 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 1/21/04 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/21/04.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

Figure 5 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 – 5 and 8 –11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rigal et al. (6,076,848). Rigal et al. discloses a strap connection device for a boot comprising:

- a base plate (Fig. 1);

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- a boot fixing band including a belt portion and a pad portion, i.e. strap (Fig. 1, item 3);
- a hardness adjusting plate, i.e. support element (Fig. 1, item 5);
- a buckle connected to the hardness adjusting plate (Fig. 1, item 8);
- a belt having one end mounted on the base plate and the other end engaged with the buckle (Fig. 1, item 31);
- wherein the hardness adjustment plate is removably mounted on the boot fixing pad (Fig. 3, items 5 and 6 & column 4, lines 35-41);
- wherein the hardness adjusting plate includes a cut-away groove (Fig. 3, items 50 and 51);
- wherein the belt portion is adjustable in length (Figs. 6 and 7);
- wherein the hardness adjustment plate is a band-shaped elastic plate, i.e. shaped like a link, strap, or tie (Fig. 3, item 5 & column 3, lines 20 and 21).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rigal et al. (6,076,848) in view of Andervon (2002/0101062). Rigal et al. does not

go into detail on the composition of the hardness adjustment plate. Andervon, however, discloses:

- a shock absorbing pad (Fig. 4, item 31) where the inner and outer portions (Fig. 4, items 53 and 54) are composed of differing materials to provide a hardness difference from interior of the binding to the exterior of the binding (page 2, paragraphs 55-57).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to take the teaching of Andervon and apply it to the strap connection device of Rigal et al. to provide a strap/hardness adjustment plate which comprises "a plurality of members being different from each other in hardness" which allows for directional modification of the hardness properties of said strap.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7 and 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The binding strap including a removable auxiliary elastic plate, in combination with the other elements recited is not found in the prior art of record.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John D. Walters whose telephone number is (571) 272-8269. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8am - 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Christopher Ellis can be reached on (571) 272-6914. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

John D. Walters
Examiner
Art Unit 3618

JDW
JW


CHRISTOPHER P. ELLIS
SUPPLYING PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600